

COHASSET HARBOR

COHASSET

MASSACHUSETTS

SURVEY  
(REVIEW OF REPORTS)

U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION, NEW ENGLAND  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
WALTHAM, MASS.



U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION, NEW ENGLAND  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
424 TRAPELO ROAD  
WALTHAM, MASS. 02154

ADDRESS REPLY TO:  
DIVISION ENGINEER

REFER TO FILE NO. NEDED-R

10 December 1965

SUBJECT: Survey (Review of Reports) on Cohasset Harbor, Cohasset,  
Massachusetts

TO: Chief of Engineers  
ATTN: ENGCW-PD

SYLLABUS

The Chief of Engineers on 20 April 1965, under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act, approved for accomplishment improvement of navigation facilities at Cohasset Harbor, Massachusetts. Formal adoption as a Federal project was made on 12 October 1965. The Division Engineer finds that no further navigation improvement in addition to that authorized is warranted at this time.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. This report is submitted in compliance with a resolution adopted 31 July 1957.

"RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, That the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors be, and is hereby, requested to review the reports on Cohasset Harbor, Massachusetts, in House Document Numbered 427, 76th Congress, 1st Session, and prior reports with a view to determining whether any modification of the existing project is advisable at this time, with particular reference to providing an anchorage area for small craft."

## DESCRIPTION OF NAVIGATION CONDITIONS

2. Cohasset Harbor is on the shore of Massachusetts, 16 miles southeast of Boston Harbor and 4.5 miles northwest of the Federally improved harbor at Scituate. The harbor, located in the Towns of Cohasset and Scituate, consists of an outer roadstead and an improved inner harbor connected by a dredged channel, about one-half mile long, 90 feet wide and 8 feet deep. The inner harbor is exposed to northeasterly winds but is partially protected by a breakwater built by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

3. The existing Federal project provides about 18 acres of anchorage space, 7 feet deep. In addition, local interests have improved the inner harbor to provide an additional 6 acres of anchorage space, 6 feet deep. Allowing for fairways, the effective area for mooring is reduced to about 20 acres, if maintained. In view of shoaling, which has occurred in the inner coves of the harbor, the present anchorage area 6 feet deep or more is about 18 acres.

4. The inner harbor serves as a place of refuge for fishermen during bad weather, provides mooring areas for racing class sailing boats, yachts, recreational, fishing and transient craft. At the present time, the number of vessels constituting the various fleets that use Cohasset Harbor total in excess of 700.

5. The principal difficulty attending navigation is insufficient space with adequate depths in Cohasset Cove, particularly for the fishing vessels, which due to crowded conditions, must anchor close to the bank, and are subject to damages from passing vessels. Limited anchorage with adequate depths throughout the remainder of the harbor results in crowding under present conditions and restricts possible further expansion of the fleets.

6. The mean range of tide at Cohasset Harbor is 8.8 feet; the spring range is 10.2 feet. The locality is shown on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts No. 244 and 246 and on the map accompanying this report.

## TRIBUTARY AREAS

7. The towns adjoining Cohasset are Hingham, Scituate and Norwell. Several of the lobster fishermen from these adjacent towns use Cohasset Harbor as the base for their fishing operations. Fishing,

agriculture on a small scale, and the business incidental to yachting and summer vacationists' trade form the principal sources of revenue for this locality.

8. Cohasset Harbor is used by yachtsmen from such points as Boston, Marblehead and other places along the shores of Massachusetts Bay. This harbor is also used by shore fishermen whose operations are confined to that portion of Massachusetts Bay between Minots Ledge Light and Graves Light. The fishing boats, which are part of the fishing fleet from Boston and Gloucester, find it convenient to lie in Cohasset Harbor overnight to procure supplies, or to take refuge, especially if forced to seek shelter from a northeast storm while in the vicinity.

9. The nearest adjacent harbors for small fishing and recreational craft are in Hingham Bay, 10 miles to the northwest and Scituate Harbor, 4.5 miles to the southeast. Scituate and Hingham Harbors have been improved by the United States. The present demand for boating facilities in Massachusetts and the increase in leisure time and money available for recreation contribute greatly to the insufficiency of present facilities for recreational craft in the area. Specifically, the facilities in both harbors are used to capacity and there remains a need for further improvement in this area. Cohasset Harbor is one of the possible locations where improvement is feasible.

#### EXISTING CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROJECT

10. The existing project for Cohasset Harbor, adopted by the River and Harbor Act of March 2, 1945, was completed in July 1960. It provides for an anchorage area in the inner harbor approximately 18 acres in area, 7 feet deep at mean low water and a channel 90 feet wide, 8 feet deep at mean low water extending from the anchorage area to the outer harbor. Federal expenditures under the existing project have been \$133,988, all for new work. Local interests complied with the requirements of local cooperation including a cash contribution of \$30,000 as the local share of the project cost.

#### PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

11. This survey report was authorized to review the previous reports to determine whether the existing project should be modified at this time. A public hearing was held at Cohasset, Mass. on 22 March 1962 to determine the nature and extent of improvements desired. Local interests desired improvement by dredging in Cohasset Cove to increase its usefulness for maneuvering of small boats and to provide additional

area for anchorage of the commercial fishing fleet at the head of the cove. They requested dredging in Bailey's Creek to increase the anchorage for recreational boating.

12. The major problem cited by the local interests is the lack of anchorage space for the large fleets of vessels based in the harbor. The Cove and the Government Island area are used by the fishing vessels for their operations and moorings due to the proximity of the public landings. In view of the limited space and the traffic by recreational craft in the Cove, the fishing vessels often are caused to ground out on the banks thus incurring delays to their operations or are forced to maneuver slowly between moored craft resulting in delay or damage due to collisions. Local interests expressed an urgency for providing adequate mooring facilities for the fishing fleet. Lack of sufficient anchorage in the remaining portions of the harbor is claimed to have resulted in crowded conditions which not only has caused damages and inconvenience to recreational craft but has hampered the growth of the present fleet.

13. The present trend in expansion of recreational fleets along the coast of Massachusetts Bay has placed great demands on harbor facilities resulting in capacity use of existing facilities in some locations and overcrowding in others. Cohasset Harbor is considered to be one of the logical locations for improvement for small craft. Several plans of improvement were considered and evaluated from an economic and engineering point of view. From the studies, it is concluded that additional Federal improvement of Cohasset Harbor is warranted, and that the greatest extent to which Federal improvement is justified is in accordance with the plan shown on the attached map. It is concluded also that facilities for mooring of small vessels beyond that which can be economically justified by a Federal project may be required in the future. However, the conclusion is drawn at this time that such future provision for the expanding recreational fleet may be obtained more economically through construction of marina type facilities.

14. In consideration of the foregoing, a plan of improvement best suited to the navigation needs was developed. This plan would modify the existing project to provide for:

12.6 acres of anchorage area, 6 feet deep as follows:

- a. 3.9 acres in Cohasset Cove
- b. 3.3 acres vicinity of Government Island area
- c. 5.4 acres in Bailey Creek

The plan represents the most economical and practical development for permitting increased use of both existing and future facilities. The scope and costs of the plan are of such magnitude as to make the plan eligible for accomplishment under the general authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act.

15. All Federal, State and local agencies interested or affected by the proposed navigation improvement were consulted during the study and they concur in the project plan.

16. State and local officials were consulted concerning the suitability of the plan of improvement.

By letter dated 30 December 1964 and 6 January 1965, State and local officials respectively commented on the adequacy of the proposed plan for meeting the navigational needs of the harbor and also indicated that they would be willing to meet the requirements of local cooperation, subject to action by State legislature and local town meetings. By letter of 1 October 1965, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts gave his approval of the project.

17. Accordingly, under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act, modification of the existing project to provide the recommended improvement was formally adopted on 12 October 1965.

18. In view of the above action, the Division Engineer concludes that the needs of present and prospective navigation in Cohasset Harbor have been met and therefore recommends no further navigation improvement of Cohasset Harbor at this time.

Incl  
Map

E. J. RIBBS  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
Acting Division Engineer

## COHASSET HARBOR, COHASSET, MASSACHUSETTS

Information Called for By Senate Resolution 148, 85th Congress  
Adopted 28 January 1958

1. This study considered the need and justification for providing navigation improvements for recreational and fishing craft at Cohasset Harbor, Massachusetts to reduce crowding of moored craft, reduce delays and permit increased harbor use.

2. The principal difficulties at Cohasset Harbor are the lack of sufficient anchorage area for small lobster and recreational craft. It is claimed by local interests that due to crowded conditions fishing vessels suffer damages due to collision and are often times delayed in leaving and entering the harbor and approaches to the town piers to unload their catch. Under present conditions, fishing vessels are forced to moor close to or on the banks of Cohasset Cove, which at times results in damages to the vessel. Maneuvering through anchored boats to enter and leave the harbor often results in minor collisions with those vessels resulting in damages to either or both vessels. Although the immediate concern of local interests is to provide adequate space for the present fishing and recreational fleets, they requested consideration be given to the future expansion of the recreational fleet. The study found that additional Federal improvement of Cohasset Harbor is warranted. It also was concluded from the study that further improvement for the expanding recreational fleet may be obtained more economically through construction of shore-based facilities.

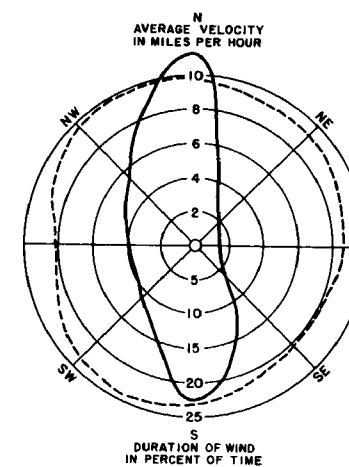
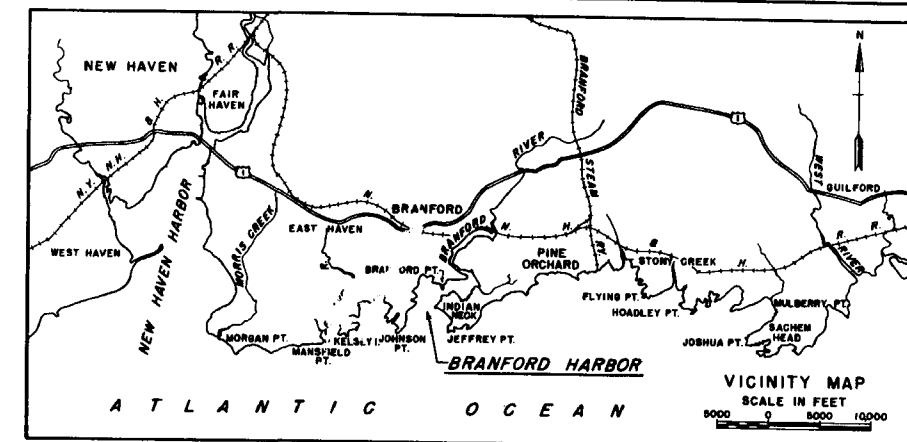
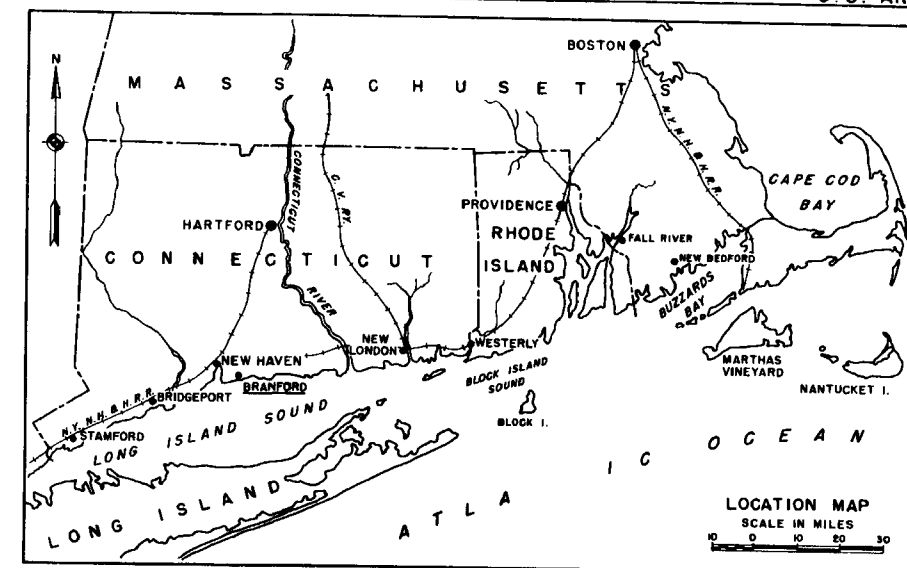
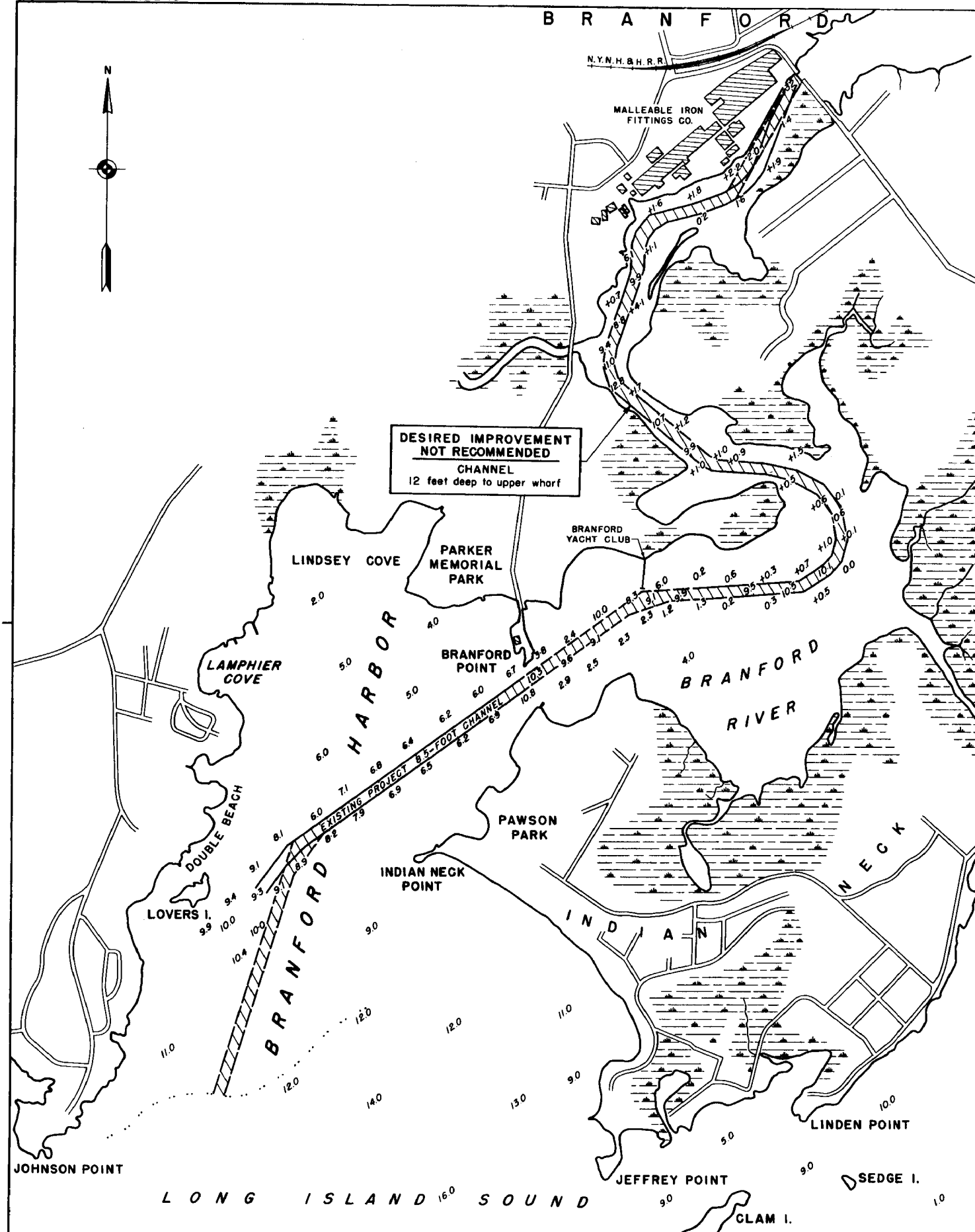
3. As a result of the study, the Chief of Engineers approved for accomplishment an improvement for Cohasset Harbor under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act. The improvement was formally adopted as a Federal project on 12 October 1965 and provides for 12.6 acres of anchorage area, 6 feet deep as follows:

- a. 3.9 acres in Cohasset Cove
- b. 3.3 acres in vicinity of Government Island area
- c. 5.4 acres in Bailey Creek

It is considered that the project dimensions as approved would be sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and prospective commercial fishing fleet and recreational fleet.

4. Local interests concur that the plan of improvement authorized would meet the needs of present and prospective navigation, and have stated a willingness and ability to meet the requirements of local cooperation in connection with the project.

5. In view of the above provisions for small craft navigation in Cohasset Harbor, no further Federal improvement beyond that presently authorized is recommended.



WIND DIAGRAM FOR NEW HAVEN, CONN.

LEGEND

--- AVERAGE VELOCITY IN M.P.H.

— DURATION IN PERCENT OF TIME

## NOTES:

Soundings in feet and tenths refer to the plane of M.L.W.

Hydrography and topography from previous surveys.

Existing Project, 8.5 foot channel, shown thus: ————

Desired 12 foot channel shown thus: ————

12 foot depth curve shown thus: . . . . .

BRANFORD HARBOR  
CONNECTICUT

IN 1 SHEET 500 0 500 1000 SCALE IN FEET

NEW ENGLAND DIVISION, BOSTON, MASS. FEB. 1956

APPROVED: [Signature] CHIEF, NEW ENGLAND DIVISION

SUBMITTED: [Signature] CHIEF, PLANNING AND REPORTS BRANCH

TO ACCOMPANY SURVEY REPORT DATED FEB. 24, 1956

FILE NO. 84. 68